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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001836

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION KUWAIT JUNE 8-9: IRAQ; HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

1. SUMMARY: Liberal commentators rose to defend the USG against criticism of the State Department Supporting Human Rights and Democracy report, characterized by Islamists as "interference in Kuwaiti internal affairs." One conservative MP also denounced US Embassy public diplomacy programs and US Embassy attendance at social events as "interference." Liberals see these attacks as evidence of Islamists put on the defensive by public support by the Kuwait government of women's rights. Iraq, however, remains the greatest focus of attention as June 30 approaches. Commentators express guarded optimism about the transfer and the ability of the Iraqis to secure their future, but also cited problems still ahead, particularly security. END SUMMARY.

2. "Al-Yawar's Safety Comes First"
Sultan Bin Huthaileen wrote in Al-Watan (6/5): "The fundamental issue which would be a real test for the new Iraqi president is whether he would successfully be able to protect himself and his colleagues in the new government. The incidents of assassinations against the Iraqi government members were perpetrated by remnants of Saddam's regime, and aimed at unsettling Iraq's security, damaging economic activity and thrusting the Iraqi people toward a culture of violence and insecurity. If Al-Yawar's government is able to counter this enormous challenge, then, undoubtedly, it can uproot the malicious elements that have got Iraq into such a predicament."

3. "The Brave"
Emad Al-Saif wrote in independent Al-Qabas (6/5): "All these terrorists who have killed innocent people and arranged for car bombs to be detonated in crowded civilian areas around Iraq have attempted to play on sectarian sentiments to start a civil war in Iraq. However, nothing advantageous can come of this, because nothing can hinder the transfer of sovereignty in Iraq. It is clear that the Iraqi people are politically mature enough to perceive the workings of such criminal plans, and determined enough to go forward and advance, despite the difficulties."

4. "New World Order: Post Iraq"
Dr. Shafiq Al-Ghabra wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-A'am (6/9): "The problems and the political complexities facing the Arab world are far too great for one preeminent power to solve. It is extremely difficult to solve such problems unilaterally. Democracy in the Arab world must begin from within. The idea of exporting democracy to the Arab world was demolished after the war in Iraq. This war destroyed the scope of the moral role of the United States, particularly that America, as a preeminent power, is spreading a universal message that calls for human rights and democracy. As the exporter of democratic values, the neoconservatives have failed dismally. This failure was due to armed conflict, the general state of chaos, bad planning and not least of all their ignorance in dealing with the Iraqis. The main problem is not about overthrowing regimes, but in the events and results afterwards."

5. "Too Much"
Dr. Shamlan Al-Issa wrote in independent Al-Seyassah (6/6): "Islamic political groups, the National Assembly's Islamic MPs in particular, have been escalating their criticism of the United States and the American Embassy in Kuwait. The latest criticism was attributed to MP Jassem Al-Kandari, who accused the U.S. Department of State of interfering in Kuwait's internal affairs. Al-Kandari also blasted the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights for Kuwait, and said it undermined Kuwait's image abroad. It is not the criticism that is odd, but the attempts by Islamic bloc to impose their will and policies on the government and community, something that is rejected by us, given the fact that had it not been for the United States, our country would have never been liberated from the Iraqi occupation."

6. "The Sovereignty They Almost Crushed in 1990"
Saud Al-Samaka wrote in independent Al-Qabas (6/7): "The accusations and claims leveled against the American Embassy

by the National Assembly's Islamic bloc, of interfering in our internal affairs, are attempts to unsettle relations between the United States and Kuwait, in particular after America designated Kuwait a strategic ally. The United States is the preeminent power today, and if her interests were at stake, then it should not hesitate to intervene, as happened during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. We must appreciate when the United States interferes, because if it is to advise us on terrorism, then this will allow us to take caution and prepare ourselves. If it is to advise on democracy, then it is to our advantage to learn from her long democratic experience. And if it is to help us utilize our resources, then it is to help us acquire know-how. So why should we refuse this?"

17. "America And Us"

Saud Al-Harbi wrote in independent Al-Watan (6/8):

"America's political philosophy is a practical interpretation of its pragmatism. We should have been aware of that here in Kuwait. In spite of the great role America played during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, we still see America in the same light as when it came to our aid nearly twelve years ago. So, why do we still insist on defending America as if we were ideologically linked to her? In fact, we have become America's biggest defenders, as if we were the ones responsible for her actions and mistakes. One such example is the Abu Ghraib case. Despite our awareness that Saddam committed worse atrocities against his people, we should have rejected this conduct out of principle, and not defended America. The reality is that we have to re-evaluate the way we deal with America."

18. "What Goes Around Comes Around"

Dr. Sami Naser Khalifa wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-A'am (6/9): "First, the occupation authority's latest military operations are the main reason behind the Shiite-Sunni unity in Iraq. Second, their wanton killing of Iraqi civilians and destruction of people's homes exposed America's ugly face. Third, with regard to our internal affairs, the Kuwaiti foreign minister is practicing appeasement through his denials on behalf of the American ambassador. Fourth, continued American control of Iraq's oil and security is a consolidation of the occupation. Fifth, every time an Arab or Muslim is killed, American and Zionist foul play is revealed."

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